1: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1954 AE9 Monguor AE9

V. FAMILY LIFE

THE EXTENDED FAMILY

591 The general principles of the Monguor family system have already been given above in Chapter III, and need here be recapitulated only very briefly. Until 1911–1922, when these notes were made, the Monguor family was a patrilineal, extended, patrilocal family. The extended family was under the authority of the grandfather, or of the great-grandfather if he survived. No family of which I had any knowledge exceeded four generations. The whole extended family lives in dwellings grouped around a common courtyard. The property and wealth are collectively owned by the whole group, but with authority over the property unequally concentrated in the senior generation. This manner of life is graphically described by the Monguors in expressions (used also by the Chinese and possibly borrowed from the Chinese) as "our family has only one chimney," or "we all eat out of one cooking-cauldron." While these sayings may be borrowed from the Chinese, the underlying principle, that of the hearth and the fire-spirit of the hearth, belongs independently to the nomad tradition from which the Monguors are descended.

Conversely, the break-up of an extended family is visibly symbolized when one of the nuclear families composing the extended family sets up its own kitchen, hearth, and chimney and begins to cook its own food separately. This means that it is parting from the extended family to which it belongs and founding a new extended family. The son who thus sets up separately becomes independent of the orders of the senior whom he formerly acknowledged as head of his family; he is beginning to work for himself and to retain any money that comes into his hands, instead of turning it over to the head of the family. When a son begins to act in this independent manner, the neighbors gossip, the family itself is uneasy, and it is recognized that the old family is breaking up.

596 587 It should not be assumed that polygamy is a regular characteristic of the extended family. Polygamy is very decidedly an economic question. On the one hand, polygamy does not go well with residence in a common courtyard, because it gives rise to quarrels among wives, and on the other hand there are few Monguors who are economically able to afford a household with more than one wife. If one of the sons living in the common courtyard should venture to ask the head of the family to provide him with a concubine (perhaps because his wife is barren) all the other daughters-in-law are jealous and their husbands share with them because they feel that the cost of the concubine means that the favored brother is being given more than his share of the family's capital. If the tormenting of the other daughters-in-law should drive the concubine to despair, she might commit suicide; and a suicide always means the complete ruin of the family.

[763]

Mo 171 /85 cont'd/

In her husband's clan, she keeps her own spirits and sho /sic/ can never be relatively to the new spirits equal to the persons born in her husband's clan. /Cited in English./

b) Relations of the son-in-law with the family of his parents-in-law.

Mo 606 The son-in-law addresses the members of his wife's family in the same way that he addresses those of his own family, but adding the term gadin in speaking of them to a third person.

There are two official visits to be made each year to his parents-in-law; the first at the new year and the second on the fifteenth of the eighth moon. In addition, it is his duty to go to ask about the health of his parents-in-law when they are sick. Likewise he will take part in the festivities which are given at their home on the occasion of a marriage, upon the birth of a first-born child, ...and he will never be absent from the mournings of the family.

It is to be noted that he will always take an active part in festivities and mournings; he does not mix with the guests, he does not have his place at dinner with the guests; but being considered as a member of the family, he will help with the preparations, he will receive the /86/ guests upon their arrival, and he will dine in the kitchen with the members of the family of his parents-in-law. Again it is his duty to lend a hand to his parents-in-law when they have to use force to defend their rights, as, for example, on the occasion of the suicide or the repudiation of one of his wife's sisters. However, the adage says that relationships must not be too intimate with a related family, and that one must avoid all kinds of commercial transactions. (1)

Mo [762]

Mi Mo 585

1. I summarize in this note, according to l'Histoire des Miao /The History of the Miao/ by Savina, 2nd ed. (1930), pp. 226-229, several resemblances

/107 cont'd/

595 [606] family to announce his intention to them. The envoy will bring the traditional jug of gin and will say that their daughter has given her consent to her husband's wishes for such and such a reason. Then he will beg the parents not to make difficulties for the son-in-law. His mission will be easy to carry out when it is a question of sterility, of widowhood, or of lack of workers. He will meet difficulties, often serious, when he has a case in the fourth category of polygamists to present.

595 762 The purpose of this interview is above all to come to an understanding with this family, who will claim to have given their daughter to be the sole mistress of the house. Then, it is a precautionary measure. Experience has taught that these unions are often disastrous, and that it is among them that the greatest number of suicide is found. Now we know the T'ou-jens' profound fear of suicides, which regularly ruin the families concerned. In case of suicide, the clans of the mother and father of the unfortunate woman present themselves in order to demand an account of the death of their daughter. If before concubinage it has been possible to obtain the consent of the family, later, if ever the misfortune comes, there will be more chance for an understanding. The husband first asks for his wife's consent because he also knows that suicide is her supreme weapon and that he can do nothing against it.

595 587 The second wife that the T'ou-jen takes is either a girl or a widow. If she is a widow, they follow the procedure for the marriage of widows; the price of a concubine widow is double or triple that of an official wife. If the second wife is a girl, they go through all the phases of the marriage of girls.

595 Well-to-do families rarely give their daughters to be concubines. Poor families will "resign themselves" to it wholeheartedly, fascinated by the extraordinary compensations which they receive for this "sacrifice." The price of girl concubines /108/ go up to 300 strings of cash and more, without counting the clothes, the dinner, and the rest; which proves abundantly that the financial situation plays a fundamental role in polygamy.

M /141 cont'd/
586 sum or to find signers and go-betweens, for nobody wants to expose
672 himself to the vengeance of the family of the repudiated wife. I knew a case where all was ready for the repudiation of a woman who was claimed to be badly formed physically. Since the family was
M rich, it was on the point of turning up its nose at all threats! At the
[762] last moment it changed its mind when it learned that the wife had just procured opium to end her life.

M Thus those who do not fear exposing themselves to such troubles
586 will repudiate their wives. Fortunately, these people are extremely
432 rare.

It must therefore be admitted that in this respect the T'ou-jen have not undergone the pernicious influence of their neighbors and masters, the Chinese, among whom repudiation and the sale of the wife often occur in normal times. One will never see T'ou-jen women sold in great numbers in time of famine as is seen in China even today. One will not meet T'ou-jen who will take a mortage on their wives, as I have seen happen twice among the Chinese. One will never see the T'ou-jen put a woman on the mountain of filial piety as I once saw done. Although with them the wife must work very hard, she is more highly esteemed and respected than in China.

M If, however, repudiation does take place, they begin by getting
586 go-betweens, who will go to consult with the wife's family. When the discussions have reached an end and the money demanded has been promised, the contract is written and signed as for divorce. The go-between, after bringing the promised sum to the family of the
M repudiated woman, /142/ will go to get the latter and present her to
[858] her parents. The children in this case stay with the husband's family. (1)

HM
586 1. Timkovski, Voyage à Péking, Vol. 2, p. 313: (Mongols.) Divorce is very frequent; the least dissatisfaction on one side or the other is enough to have it declared. If the husband wants to be separated from his wife without a

/152 cont'd/

604 sister's children. Note that even if the father had been living, the procedure would have been the same.

The maternal uncle plays the principal role in the parleys on [762] the occasion of the suicide of his sister's children. Third series of facts: A young woman, an unbearable scold, had abandoned her poor husband to follow a lover in easier circumstances. After two or three years, since she no longer got along with him either, the woman came back to her family, who wanted to return her to her legitimate husband. Fearing that at the least quarrel she might swallow opium and ruin his family, he required the maternal uncle of the shrew to constitute himself guarantor that there would not be any action on the part of his family in case the woman committed suicide. There was a family council, and the maternal uncle signed a contract in the sense indicated after making strongly virulent admonitions to his niece. The maternal uncle had to make the pledge, and not her own father. I met an absolutely similar case among the Chinese of Kansu.

These three series of facts prove the maternal uncle's rights of life and death over his sister's children. They are all of relatively recent date. In none of these cases was the maternal uncle charged at law. This is therefore proof that present-day custom still accepts these rights.

604 /153/ In China also, moreover, the rights of the maternal
171 uncle are very extensive even today; the Chinese proverb says enough about it, "kieou-fou kao wai-cheng, iang lao tse k'eng pou hia," i.e., "when the maternal uncle makes a charge at law against one of his sister's children, the children's own father can do nothing to defend them." (1) The maternal uncle has the right to punish his

1. Shirokogoroff, op. cit., p. 144: If the mother should accuse her son, intervention to stop the execution in this case can be made by the mother's brother, who can take the guilty man under his charge.... In the intervention

[648 cont.]

766 and on the same day on which the girl died. If she died in the morning, she is burned in the evening; if she died in the late evening, she is burned the following morning. A man from her own family takes the corpse just as it is, with the clothes, over his shoulder, carries it to a remote ravine, digs a hole by a copse, piles straw and twigs in it, puts the corpse on top, and burns it. Usually a few other people also help. One does not wait until the dead girl is completely reduced to ashes, but leaves the still smoldering corpse behind and goes home. Dogs and wolves consume the remains. As soon as a girl has been married, however, 764 even if only for a few days, she receives an honorable cremation like any other woman, with all the ceremonies, with prayer, and with a death-box. This also applies to those daughters who [588] have not yet found a man, but who are married to the sky or the mani-tree.

762 If an adult, whether a man or a married woman, has 766 killed himself, he receives the usual cremation ceremonies without fire-pouring and without a death-box. Usually no one [782] is invited to give the prayer. At the final funeral meal, how- [604] ever, the mother's brother will demand a precise accounting concerning the causes of the suicide, especially if a woman is involved, and he will insist upon an honorable death rite with a death-box. Disputes are common at such times.

766 Those who lost their lives through violence, such as drownings, falls from heights, murder, etc., receive a cremation or interment like any other person of the same age.

[649] Those who died outside the yard, be it an ordinary death or through an accident or suicide, are always laid out outside of the compound, say, in a special tent or in a cave. If a suicide has taken place inside the yard, however, the person who has taken his life is laid out in the house.

792 Persons who have died far away are brought home. If 766 this is not possible, for instance, in the case of soldiers, a lama is invited. While praying he writes down the name of the de- [212] ceased on a stiff sheet of paper and sticks it in a measure of grain (wheat), which is then placed on a table in the room into which otherwise the death-box would have been brought. All the same ceremonies are now carried out in front of it, as though

tery in the most luxurious style. The head temple, with its gilt tiled roof, which had been preserved, was embellished and other temples rebuilt. He rebuilt a splendid palace for himself patterned after the most luxurious palaces in Peking. Chang-chia's Ch'ie-bzan was the wealthiest monastery in the country, with 150 lamas, 2 colleges, and 4 minor Living Buddhas. Most of its wealth was provided by Mongols, among whom the influence and prestige of Chang-chia was proverbial. 175 792 346

Every year, lama expeditions of Ch'ie-bzan traveled in Mongolia in order to collect alms. Chang-chia's prestige was so great that the Queen of the Torgots came to Ch'ie-bzan in 1913, to invite the intendant of the monastery to send an expedition among her tribesmen, for it had been a long time since an expedition had reached her country. I happened to be at Ch'ie-bzan in 1914 when the expedition returned. It had collected 3,000 sheep, 400 horses, and 280 camels, which were loaded with wool and skins. 175 794 648

The breach between T'u-kuan and Sumpa, which occurred in 1890, was more tragic. During the rebellion of the Moslems, Sumpa (born in 1854) had fled among the Mongols and Tibetans, north of Kukunor. He met with a Mongol girl, whom he had moved to his branch monastery called Sumpa-ssu. The lama community of Erh-ku-lung, after some years, could no longer stand the disrepute brought on the monastery. It brought suit against Sumpa before the Amban in the prefectural city of Hsining, claiming he was not a genuine reincarnation. The lama community urged that he be erased from the list of Buddhas, and insisted on the right to search for the genuine reincarnation. For several months the lamas disturbed the whole city with the scandal, and spent money. The Chinese enjoyed all the incidents of the trial. Sumpa lost his face and honor irretrievably. Sumpa, however, was rich and the Amban venal. The Amban finally proposed that Sumpa leave Erh-ku-lung and move to one of his affiliates. This reincarnation (the third) of the illustrious Sumpa, having cut a sorry figure, never returned to Erh-ku-lung, but lived at his branch where, in 1916, his two girls delighted the old age of their father, who was sixty. His eldest daughter had married the son of the chief of the Aruk tribe. In 1916 the old man made a pilgrimage to Lhasa, and the lamas said he was atoning for his sins. No wonder that the Li-fan yüan records lacked information concerning the subsequent reincarnations of the Great Sumpa. 175 578 792 [691]

The Living Buddha Ch'ie-bzan of Erh-ku-lung having a branch monastery of his own, moved into it, appearing at Erh-ku-lung only to attend the festivals. The Living Buddha Wang lived in retired seclusion. Soon after the trial of Sumpa, the minor Living Buddha Tsung-tsa, one of the eleven, followed in the steps of Sumpa and established a family in Tsung-tsa. In the winter of the same year, the minor Living Buddha Seerting was taken and beaten at night by the husband and 175 792 627 762

[p.37(A)]

4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

friends of a lady Seerting was "visiting." He was found the next morning hanging from a beam in his palace. The loss of face had been too tremendous. Erh-ku-lung had become a place of unrelieved misery. The year 1890 was one of the most fateful in the history of Erh-ku-lung.

After the withdrawal of Chang-chia Hutukhtu and Sumpa Hutukhtu, T'u-kuan became the actual omnipotent chief of the monastery, and acted and was recognized as such. Because it is customary to hush up dishonorable facts deliberately, Chang-chia and Sumpa were very seldom spoken about. It was a long time before I knew they had been the honored co-founders of the monastery.

The former glorious days of Erh-ku-lung vanished. There were no longer learned men at the monastery, which for a century had been the most celebrated center of learning in Huang-chung. Its renown for science passed to the now flourishing monastery of Labrang. The tragic departure of two of its glorious founders put a blight on it, and left a leaden atmosphere of gloom hovering over it. Troubles had succeeded each other. Kumbum, in the meantime, had made great strides, and became the most celebrated monastery of Huang-chung. It was visited by caravans of pilgrims from Mongolia and Tibet, which no longer cared for, or even paid a visit to Erh-ku-lung. Once at the top of the Lamaist world, Erh-ku-lung became a dim shadow of its former self, a second-rate monastery.

III. THE LAMASERIES IN HUANG-CHUNG

THE YELLOW SECT IN HUANG-CHUNG

This chapter will deal with the organization of the lamaseries in Huang-chung. The forty-two monasteries and branches situated north of the Hsining River were built according to the pattern of the old mother monastery of Erh-ku-lung. It seems obvious, therefore, to base the study on this initial institution, the most renowned and flourishing in former times. Because all the lamaseries of the Yellow Sect in Huang-chung have been organized on the same pattern, a general view of Lamaist institutions can thus be obtained.

The study is founded on facts collected during a stay of many years among the Monguors; which may give a better insight into the matter and reveal the trend of mind of the actors.

THE LAMASERIES OF HUANG-CHUNG INDEPENDENT OF LHASA

All the lamaseries in Huang-chung are autonomous units, independent of Lhasa both in matters of administration and appointment of superiors, even in matters of doctrine. The Achia Lama defended the autonomy of Kumbum against the illegal interference of the Dalai Lama in 1908 by committing suicide. This energetic

[p. 37(8)]

toward his father, and he could not understand how the same individual could happen to be the incarnation of the father and the son. Then Achia talked to him like a father, telling him to be more circumspect and to behave more decently, for many tales were already spreading about his behavior with Tibetan women. Liberties of that kind, he said, outraging the Lamaist conventions, were not allowed at Kumbum. The lamas of Kumbum, breathing fire and brimstone, prepared their weapons and called together lamas of neighboring monasteries. The officials of Hsining (the Amban, the General, the tao-t'ai, and the prefect) were in a hurry, and went to Kumbum with troops in order to prevent a clash. Finally, in order to get rid of the Dalai Lama as fast as possible, they decided to let him appoint three lama officials and then to depose them after his departure. The Dalai Lama left, and the three appointed officials also left as quickly as possible for fear of being killed by the Kumbum lamas. The deposed officials assumed their jobs again, but Achia, deeming that he had irretrievably lost face, cut his throat. Several times I heard this tragic story, told by the Amban himself and by the officials at Kumbum.

The Dalai Lama cut a sorry figure in Hsining in 1909. The residence of Achia, destroyed by fire in 1895, was still not rebuilt in 1914, although all the materials for the reconstruction had been ready since 1909. The wood had been offered by the Tibetan Chief, Kach-htjir, and a contract had been written by the intendancy, promising Kach-htjir and his relatives the privilege of always staying at the residence, whenever they visited Kumbum.

Chao, the Living Buddha of Sia-mar, was a most celebrated man all over the country for his skill in patching up troubles, his unusual eloquence, proficiency in using the double-edged sword, of menaces and threats, soft words and blandishments. However, his influence lay in his cultivated acquaintance with the Chinese officials, to whom he paid visits and offered lavish gifts, and whom in due time he would use and provide with lawsuits that would benefit them. He was credited with having marvelous abilities and of being a powerful man. The saying went around that his special kind of intelligence weighed so heavily on one side of his body, that the soles of a new pair of shoes, after a few days, were always run down on the same side—the side where his intelligence was pressing the most.

He had obtained the office of chiliarch, the old privilege of judging the numerous tribes formerly subjected to his predecessors. He started abolishing, among his subjects, the smoking and planting of opium, with Draconian severity, and flogging and fining addicts of alcohol. He compelled the Chinese, to whom his subjects had transferred lands, to return the fields. Wherever there happened to be a festival, he pitched his tent and waited to render justice. Young women who had eloped and had been brought back by his retinue of

villagers, who also did not permit such liberties to Living Buddhas. Feeling the stigma attached to his exposure, he committed suicide. It also seems to be evidenced by the fact that penalties are still inflicted upon lamas, in the crudest forms, for infraction of this rule. This stigma is still attached to those who fail to meet their moral obligations.

The reform by means of serious study, however, seems to be a failure among the Monguor lamas of the present times. Among so many Monguor Living Buddhas and lamas, only the Living Buddha Chao-hsi of Kumbum enjoyed some repute, but in order to cause the lamas to attend his instructions, special benefits had to be provided for them. Very few among the Living Buddhas and lamas are interested in study at the present time, and, having nothing to occupy them all day, become involved in vice. Army officers and directors of schools are aware of the necessity of keeping young folk busy the whole day long, alternating fixed jobs with recreation. The lamas, however, except for attendance at the morning convention, which lasts only an hour, have to kill time making their own living.

In the whole region of Hsining not a single school has been established by the rich monasteries, in order to promote the instruction of the Monguors and the Tibetans. Even at present in the lamaseries not a single elementary school exists for the lama boys, and no religious education is given to them. Not a single lama takes care of the spiritual needs and instruction of the adherents to their religion who live in a given area. Not a single hospital has been founded in order to assuage the pains and sufferings of the sick Monguors and Tibetans. The universal charity of Lamaism does not consist in love for one's neighbor, but in a platonic compassion for the universal sufferings of humanity and of all living things and for the impermanence of all existing beings. Lamas are not sisters of charity; they pass the sick draped in their cloak of indifference.[29]

[29] Kawaguchi, *op. cit.*, 373, notes: "Among Buddhist believers there has been scarcely anyone who has ever given any thought to social problems. The priests of ancient times were generally recluses who paid no attention whatever to the application of their religion to the needs of the practical world or to making the principles of true Buddhism as distinct as possible."

Kawaguchi, a learned Japanese Buddhist, conversant with the Tibetan language and literature, went to Tibet to study Lamaism, and wrote an instructive note on Lamaism (p. 410). "I confine myself only to a popular exposition of the subject. Lamaism is constituted by two main branches; the older, the 'red cap sect' subdivided into many branches, and the later, the 'yellow cap sect.' They all agree upon cardinal points and in the formula for attaining perfection. The founder of the old sect was a Tantric priest, 'Lobon Padma Chungne' born in Cabul. He enjoined on his disciples the practices of flesh-eating, marriage, and drinking liquors, in order to attain Buddhahood . . . details I cannot give, for they are full of obscenity. The old sect, extremely popular in Tibet, has undergone considerable modification by lamas. . . . I note the reaction against the old sect by Atisha [from India, eleventh century], later by Tsong Khapa [fifteenth century]. The principle of Tsong Khapa was that priesthood must stand on asceticism. Therefore he urged

[p.72 (B)]

5:Schram M-5 (1911-1922)1961 AE9 Monguor AE9

While the t'u-ssu and their subjects were fighting and suffering and dying in Hsining, the despairing Ming emperor, on April 25, 1644, had hanged himself in the Wan Sui Shan in Peking. On June 6, 1644, the troops of the new Ch'ing dynasty entered Peking and started at full speed with destruction of the troops of Li Tze-ch'eng who had already proclaimed himself emperor. On October 7, 1644, he ended his life by hanging himself.[87]

The t'u-ssu and their subjects served the Ch'ing dynasty with the same faithfulness they had served the Ming dynasty.

At the time the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) started with the occupation of Huangchung, this was an insecure colony of China, which during the previous dynasties had been lost several times and recovered. The Ming organized the country, providing a civil and military administration on the Chinese pattern. In Huangchung they started with the founding of military colonies, induced the Tibetan tribes to submit to them, established the exchange bureau of tea for horses, favored and protected the arrival of traders from inside China, and promoted agriculture and commerce. They attracted Chinese to settle in the country, built schools, promoted education, and repelled forays of Tibetans and Mongols from outside the Huangchung borders. Huangchung was at peace.

However, in the fateful year 1509 the first group of Mongols arrived and settled in Kokonor, followed by one after another, which ruined and cowed into submission the Tibetan tribes of Kokonor. At the same time the population of Huangchung and East Kansu, from 1509 to 1597, succumbed to the recurrent onslaught of avid, restless and predatory Mongols. The Tibetan tribes, robbed of their cattle, having seen their women and young folk abducted, beset with starvation and abject poverty, started raiding, devastating, and laying waste Huangchung and East Kansu. The army could not deter the forces of destruction. Raids prevailed over the entire northwestern borders of the empire, and the emperor gave the Huangchung officers insufficient reinforcements. It was only in 1590 that the energetic Minister of War, Cheng Lo, commanding new forces, succeeded in defeating the brigands. In the meantime the administration had incessantly built cities, villages, schools, walls, and fortresses all over the country. The aspect of the country had changed completely, despite the desperate times. The country had been organized and the administration established.

During these times, when raids and destruction raged unchecked, Chinese and Shat'o and Uighurs, Tibetans and Monguors had suffered together, helped and sheltered each other, and blended and fused in the compound called the Huangchung population.

In 1644 when the Ch'ing dynasty occupied Huangchung it was no longer the depopulated unorganized

[87] Erich Hauer, *op. cit.*, 488, 494, 497.